

Twentieth Century Saxophone With a Touch of Baroque

The saxophone has progressed immensely since its invention in 1846 by the Belgian musical instrument designer, Adolphe Sax. This fairly new addition to the musical world has developed over the years into an extremely versatile instrument capable of being used in a wide range of musical settings, anything from classical to jazz to rock and roll. Throughout the Twentieth Century, the saxophone has seen an enormous growth in contemporary repertoire. Advanced techniques have become widely accepted as part of this new output and a variety of musical outlets have opened for saxophonists worldwide. The pieces below illustrate some of the versatility of this innovative instrument. This program was performed on a senior recital on November 22, 2008.



Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739)

Benedetto Marcello was an Italian composer and writer born in Venice in 1686. Marcello's compositions include operas, oratorios, cantatas, madrigals, concerti, and sonatas. He is best known for his work *Estro poetico-armonico*, a musical setting for voices and instruments of the first 50 Psalms in an Italian paraphrase by G. Giustiniani.

Concerto in C minor (ca. 1716)

I. Allegro Moderato

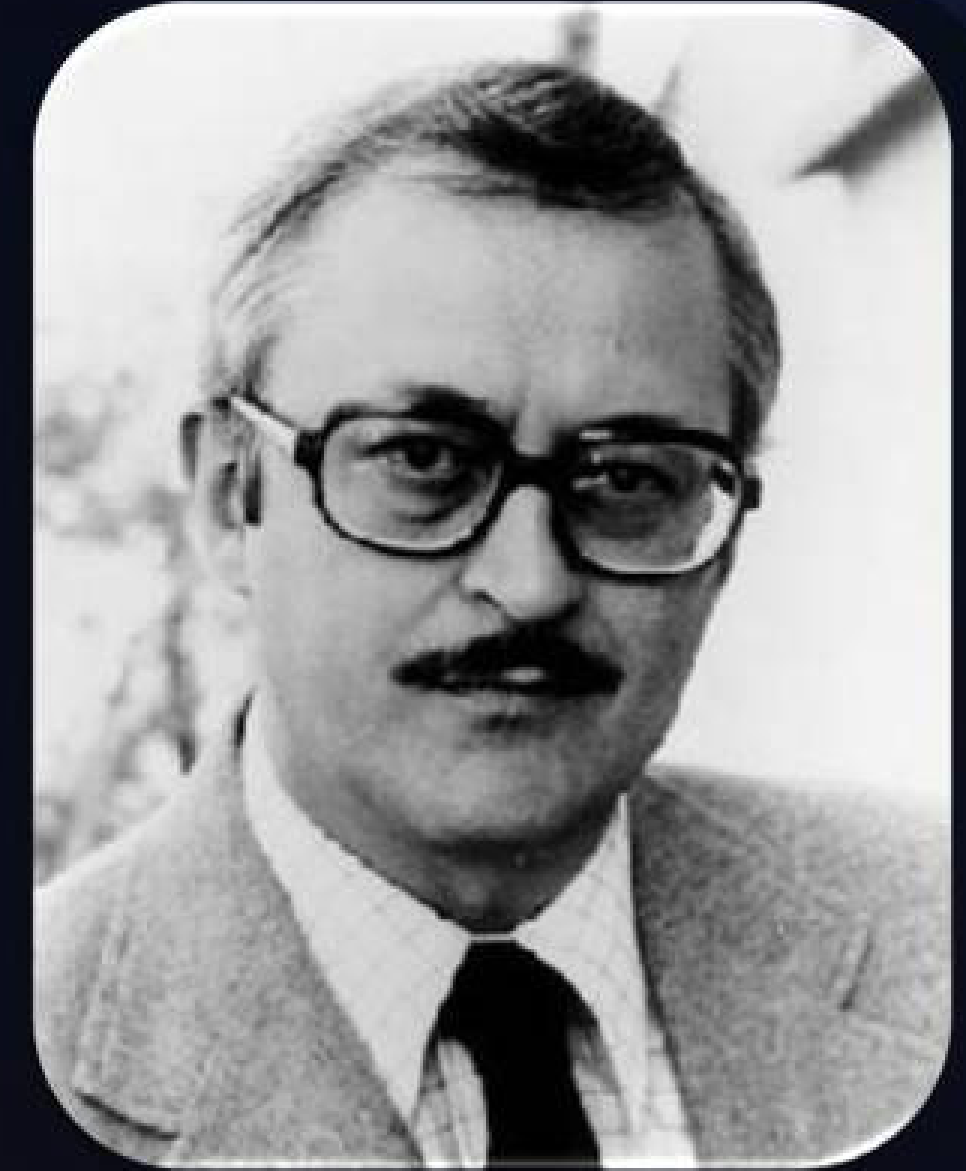
II. Adagio

III. Allegro

Marcello's *Concerto in C minor*, originally composed for oboe, was transcribed for soprano saxophone by Harvey Pittel. The three movements of this work are characteristic of the Baroque style. Techniques employed by Marcello include the use of terraced dynamics, ornaments such as trills and grace notes, and sixteenth note passages that are passed between the saxophone and piano.

Robert Muczynski (b. 1929)

Robert Muczynski was born in Chicago in 1929. He studied piano and composition at DePaul University in Chicago where he received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees in piano performance. Robert Muczynski has previously taught at DePaul University, Loras College, Roosevelt University, and the University of Arizona.



Sonata, Op. 29 (1970)

I. Andante maestoso

II. Allegro energico

The first movement of this piece is very slow and mysterious. It gradually builds to a climax before returning to the original expressive theme first heard in the opening bars. Movement two is very exciting and energetic. It poses many challenges for both performers in range and technique. This fast paced movement contains many instances of syncopation and passages in the altissimo register.

Ryo Noda (b. 1948)

Ryo Noda is a Japanese saxophonist known for incorporating innovative saxophone techniques in his compositions. He graduated from the Osaka College of Music and has studied under Fred Hemke at Northwestern University in Illinois and Jean-Marie Londeix at the Bordeaux Conservatory in France.



Mai (1975)

This programmatic piece tells the story of a samurai in Japan who commits suicide after abandoning his profession of making war to save his fellow men. After committing this act, the samurai is then questioned by the distraught wife he left behind. This is an unaccompanied piece that contains many advanced techniques for the saxophone such as multiphonics, altissimo, note bends and extremely difficult technical passages.



Alfred Desenclos (1912-1971)

Alfred Desenclos was a composer born in Portel, France in 1912. He received the Prix de Rome composition award in 1942 and, in 1943, was appointed director of the Conservatory at Roubaix. *Prelude, Cadence et Finale* was written for the famous French saxophonist and teacher Marcel Mule.

Prelude, Cadence et Finale (1956)

This piece is divided into three distinct sections to be played without pause. The introductory prelude is very lyrical and mystifying. The use of dynamic contrast and rubato gives the performers a chance to expound upon the musicality of this section. This is followed by a piano interlude which builds upon the tension created in the prelude. The cadenza allows the solo saxophonist to explore the extreme ranges of the instrument in a highly technical manner while taking many musical liberties. The finale is very rhythmic and technically challenging for both performers. The return of a variation of the original theme of the finale is heard towards the end of the piece, and builds in small increments as the piece nears its final climax.

Radiohead

Radiohead are an English alternative rock band formed in 1986 in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. Since their inception, the band has been composed of Thom Yorke (lead vocals, guitar, piano), Jonny Greenwood (guitar, keyboard), Ed O'Brien (guitar, backing vocals), Colin Greenwood (bass guitar, synthesizers), and Phil Selway (drums). Radiohead have sold approximately 30 million albums internationally as of 2008.



Paranoid Android (1997)

Radiohead's *Paranoid Android* is from the album *OK Computer*. This piece, said to be about total chaos, gives each saxophone performer the opportunity to emulate the sounds and effects of the guitar, bass guitar, and voice. The guitar and vocals are passed between the soprano, alto, and tenor saxophones while the baritone saxophone continuously carries the bass line. This piece contains many instances of shifting duple and triple meters. Rhythmic syncopation is heavy within the arrangement, and the performers must exhibit individual control and balance when transitioning to new sections or passing the melodic lines to one another.